



**Greetings – The best part of my job as an at-large member of the Montgomery County Council is hearing from you. So don't be shy. Let me know what I can help you with or what your views are about what the Council is doing.**

**Remember, I got elected to serve you. Please don't hesitate to let me know how I can help! Also, I would like to meet with your citizen's association or civic group. Please contact my office to let me know when I can join you.**

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### **December Community Forum Set**

#### **“Planning and Development You Can Rely On—Accountability in a Post-Clarksburg World”**

**Many of you have been reading about the issues in Clarksburg. I am working with my fellow Council members to help resolve the many problems encountered by the**

**homeowners there. While we cannot change the past, what we can and must do is come up with new ideas to strengthen the whole system. This is why I am organizing a Community Forum to discuss the future and structure of our planning process. Please join me, along with former Planning Board Chairmen and representatives of the business and civic community for this important discussion on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. on the Montgomery County Campus of Johns Hopkins University. There will be panel presentations and then the floor will be open to ideas, suggestions, and constructive comments from the audience. Some questions that need to be addressed are:**

- How do we ensure sufficient accountability in the planning and development process?**
- How much flexibility in planning and regulatory provisions can we retain while still ensuring predictability in development?**
- How can we achieve better coordination between the Planning Board staff and County government departments while preserving the independence of the planning process?**

**We need your input on how to move forward. I hope you can join us for this very important discussion.**

**NANCY FLOREEN**

**P.S. If you can't make it, please let me know any specific suggestions you want us to consider. It is important that all good ideas get put on the table for discussion.**

### **Clarksburg Update**

Since late June, when news of the Clarksburg violations first broke, I have been working hard on all the issues. I have called for periodic updates before the Transportation and Environment Committee, which I chair, on the progress - or current lack thereof - of the road network in this quickly growing area. Our first report was less than satisfactory, and I have called for better information and an improved timeline at the next meeting on November 3rd.

In addition, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, of which I am a member, is holding oversight meetings with Park and Planning every two weeks.

I am co-sponsoring, with the County Executive and colleague Howie Denis, legislation to transfer site plan enforcement responsibility from [Park and Planning](#) to the County's [Department of Permitting Services](#) (DPS). The Council was appalled to learn that no building height and setback inspections were being done by Park and Planning, even though they had requested enforcement powers many years ago. DPS employees have the tools and experience to do this kind of inspection, and we will see that they have the proper staffing level. I think our residents will feel reassured once we have a strict enforcement program in place.

I have visited Clarksburg often in the last 6 months and met several times with the residents who brought the violations to light. As a former member of the Planning Board, I am convinced we must return integrity to the planning and development process to restore public confidence in our County's future.

### **Girls In Information Technology**

We have all heard the statistics about how math and science classes are dominated by boys. There are even those who make extreme claims that girls don't have the ability to excel at math and science in way boys do. Give me a break! I strongly believe that something needs to be done to encourage our young girls to pursue training that will lead to careers in technology. That is why I am proud to be the Chair of the Girls in Information Technology Task Force. I work with a group of committed individuals within the community, including [MCPS](#), CISCO Systems, and the [Montgomery County Commission for Women](#) not to mention my colleague, Mike Subin, to address the issues surrounding the recruitment and retention of girls in technology related classes.

In order to compete in a global economy, the next generation will need to be ready for what's coming. Technology skills are the basis for any job in the marketplace -- from piloting a plane to nursing to car repair. I believe that, as parents, we need to make sure our children stay on the technology track by encouraging them to take math and science classes and learn how to program.

Everything is possible with the right attitude and strong backing. So help instill those attitudes. Don't let your girls off easy. Let's not pass on our own timidity and frustration about technology. And let's work to give our girls that competitive edge. We do not want them to encounter another glass ceiling. I will be doing my part. Watch for the Task Force report to come out next spring.

### Workforce Housing

***The question of affordable housing remains near the top of everyone's list of concerns. On October 11<sup>th</sup>, I joined my colleague, Steve Silverman, in sponsoring legislation to create a new program for residents currently priced out of the housing market, but making too much to qualify for existing programs. The Workforce Housing proposal is our latest initiative to make sure that Montgomery County continues to be accessible to folks of all income levels. This County has wonderful schools, public safety services, hospitals, and libraries. The people who provide these outstanding services should have the chance to live here also, but increasing housing prices are making that nearly impossible.***

***This bill will require all new residential projects around metro stations to provide an extra layer of housing units affordable to people with average incomes. And the legislation puts density where it should be, in areas where substantial transit opportunities already exist. This should help both our housing crisis and our transportation problems by getting people off the roads and onto Metro.***

### This Year in Jerusalem

During the summer, I, and my County Council colleague Mike Knapp -- along with a number of other officials from the Washington region -- were privileged to set off on an eight-day journey through Israel under the leadership of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

As an elected official on my first visit to Israel, I found myself constantly searching for parallels with Montgomery County and weighing how others addressed similar issues.

At a meeting with Yael Dayan, daughter of revolutionary leader Moshe Dayan and Deputy Mayor of Tel Aviv, we shared common concerns over education funding, immigrant education issues - particularly how to more easily assimilate children of non-native speaking parents-- the challenges of providing quality pre-school care, and the international challenge of women everywhere - dealing with men!

Our visits with political and military leaders and commentators were energized by lengthy debates about the appropriate way to secure Israel's future in the context of over a dozen political parties, complex loyalties, and the unending intricacies of geopolitical strategizing.

Visiting a country that cannot be distracted from its primary mission of securing its borders and its future puts our local debates into welcome context. Clarksburg and the ICC debate pale in comparison to the real threat of suicide bombers and terrorists. We are fundamentally safe and free to focus on the local issues. What a gift.

### Capital Budget

The FY2007 budget season includes a full CIP (Capital Improvements Program) review so the Council will be holding a complete set of hearings tentatively scheduled for February 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>. If there is a school, road, library, or other project or expenditure you are strongly supporting, I suggest you consider testifying. After the Council receives the



CIP from the Executive on January 15, 2006, call 240-777-7931 to sign up to testify.

If you are not able to appear before the Council, you can always write or e-mail your comments. I find it extremely useful to hear your thoughts about a proposed project.

When testifying before the County Council or meeting with a Councilmember on an issue or project, please remember to keep it short and clear. Also, it is very helpful to leave a summary that includes your name, phone number, and e-mail address. We are human, and we may need to ask for more information.

### **Good News on the Air Quality Front!**

As vice-chair of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, I am delighted to report that the Washington region had no “code red” days the summer. As hot as it was, our region appears to be seeing the benefits of our efforts to control noxious emissions.



My colleagues from DC and Fairfax County join me to celebrate no “code red” days.

### **Drainage Legislation**

As neighborhood discontent over infill construction increases in our down county area, the height of new or renovated homes is getting all the attention. However, the impacts from water runoff onto adjacent properties from the new or expanded house can often be a much bigger, more long-term and costly problem for neighbors. It certainly is one of the top complaints my office receives. Therefore, on September 6, I introduced Bill 26-05 Storm water - Drainage and Runoff to prevent such problems.

I have heard and seen real horror stories. Someone builds a pool and two weeks later the neighbor has a lake in the backyard. After a rainstorm, a new house causes water in the basement next door.

I have talked with many residents and met with County inspectors. I was surprised to learn the County does not require a grading permit or drainage plans for new construction. This bill will remedy that gap. The bottom line is that without changes in the County Code, these problems could not be addressed.

Under this legislation, in order to receive a construction permit, the applicant must show how the project will affect the flow of water on to neighboring properties and how negative impacts will be avoided. I feel we owe our neighbors this protection.

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